

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEVADA

TRINIDAD REYES-DELEON,

Plaintiff,

vs.

MICHAEL J. ASTRUE, COMMISSIONER OF
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION,

Defendant.

Case No. 2:13-cv-00026-JCM-PAL

ORDER

(IFP App - Dkt. #1)

Plaintiff **Trinidad Reyes-Deleon** has requested authority pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915 to proceed in forma pauperis and submitted a Complaint. This proceeding was referred to this court by Local Rule IB 1-9.

I. In Forma Pauperis Application

Plaintiff has submitted the affidavit required by § 1915(a) showing an inability to prepay fees and costs or give security for them. Accordingly, the request to proceed in forma pauperis will be granted pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a). The court will now review Plaintiff's Complaint.

II. Screening the Complaint

Upon granting a request to proceed in forma pauperis, a court must additionally screen a complaint pursuant to § 1915(a). Federal courts are given the authority dismiss a case if the action is legally "frivolous or malicious," fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). When a court dismisses a complaint under § 1915(a), the plaintiff should be given leave to amend the complaint with directions as to curing its deficiencies, unless it is clear from the face of the complaint that the

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1 deficiencies could not be cured by amendment. *See Cato v. United States*, 70 F.3d 1103, 1106 (9th Cir.
2 1995).

3 Rule 12(b)(6) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure provides for dismissal of a complaint for
4 failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. Review under Rule 12(b)(6) is essentially a
5 ruling on a question of law. *North Star Intern. v. Arizona Corp. Comm'n*, 720 F.2d 578, 580 (9th Cir.
6 1983). In considering whether a plaintiff has stated a claim upon which relief can be granted, all
7 material allegations in the complaint are accepted as true and are to be construed in the light most
8 favorable to the plaintiff. *Russell v. Landrieu*, 621 F.2d 1037, 1039 (9th Cir. 1980). Allegations of a
9 pro se complaint are held to less stringent standards than formal pleading drafted by lawyers. *Haines v.*
10 *Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972) (per curiam).

11 Plaintiff's Complaint challenges a decision by the Social Security Administration ("SSA")
12 denying Plaintiff Social Security disability insurance benefits. Before Plaintiff can sue the SSA in
13 federal court, he must exhaust her administrative remedies. 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). *See Bass v. Social Sec.*
14 *Admin.*, 872 F.2d 832, 833 (9th Cir. 1989) (per curiam) ("Section 405(g) provides that a civil action
15 may be brought only after (1) the claimant has been party to a hearing held by the Secretary, and (2) the
16 Secretary has made a final decision on the claim"). Generally, if the SSA denies a claimant's
17 application for SSI, she can request reconsideration of the decision. If the claim is denied at the
18 reconsideration level, a claimant may request a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ").
19 If the ALJ denies the claim, a claimant may request review of the decision by the Appeals Council. If
20 the Appeals Council declines to review the ALJ's decision, a claimant may then request review by the
21 United States District Court. *See generally* 20 C.F.R. §§ 404, 416. Plaintiff alleges that on December
22 18, 2012, the Appeals Council denied his request for review, and the ALJ's decision became the final
23 decision of the Commissioner. Thus, it appears Plaintiff has exhausted his administrative remedies.

24 Once Plaintiff has exhausted her administrative remedies, he can obtain review of an SSA
25 decision denying benefits by commencing a civil action within sixty days after notice of a final
26 decision. *Id.* An action for judicial review of a determination by the SSA must be brought in a District
27 Court of the United States for the judicial district in which the Plaintiff resides. *Id.* The Complaint
28 should state the nature of Plaintiff's disability, when Plaintiff claims he became disabled, and when and

1 how he exhausted her administrative remedies. It should also contain a plain, short, and concise
 2 statement identifying the nature of Plaintiff's disagreement with the determination made by the Social
 3 Security Administration and show that Plaintiff is entitled to relief. A district court can affirm, modify,
 4 reverse, or remand a decision if Plaintiff has exhausted his administrative remedies and timely filed a
 5 civil action. However, judicial review of the Commissioner's decision to deny benefits is limited to
 6 determining: (a) whether there is substantial evidence in the record as a whole to support the findings of
 7 the Commissioner; and (b) whether the correct legal standards were applied. *Morgan v. Commissioner*
 8 *of the Social Security Adm.*, 169 F.3d 595, 599 (9th Cir. 1999).

9 Plaintiff's Complaint seeks judicial review of the Commissioner's decision denying Plaintiff
 10 Social Security disability insurance benefits and requests the court reverse that decision, or
 11 alternatively, remand this matter for a new hearing. Plaintiff contends the ALJ's decision was
 12 erroneous, not supported by substantial evidence in the record, and/or contrary to law. Accordingly,
 13 Plaintiff has stated a claim for initial screening purposes under 28 U.S.C. § 1915.

14 Based on the foregoing,

15 **IT IS ORDERED** that:

- 16 1. Plaintiff's request to proceed in forma pauperis is GRANTED. Plaintiff shall not
 17 be required to pay the filing fee of three hundred fifty dollars.
- 18 2. Plaintiff is permitted to maintain this action to conclusion without the necessity of
 19 prepayment of any additional fees or costs or the giving of a security therefor. This
 20 Order granting leave to proceed in forma pauperis shall not extend to the issuance of
 21 subpoenas at government expense.
- 22 3. The Clerk of Court shall file the Complaint.
- 23 4. The Clerk of the Court shall serve the Commissioner of the Social Security
 24 Administration by sending a copy of the summons and Complaint by certified mail to:
 25 (1) Office of the Regional Chief Counsel, Region IX, Social Security Administration,
 26 160 Spear St., Suite 899, San Francisco, CA, 94105-1545; and (2) the Attorney General
 27 of the United States, Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Room
 28 4400, Washington, D.C. 20530.

- Dated this 4th day of March, 2013.

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